

**§ 1317. Restriction on payments under this chapter**

(a) Except as provided in subsection (b), no person eligible for dependency and indemnity compensation by reason of any death occurring after December 31, 1956, shall be eligible by reason of such death for any payments under (1) provisions of law administered by the Secretary providing for the payment of death compensation or death pension, or (2) subchapter I of chapter 81 of title 5.

(b) A surviving spouse who is eligible for dependency and indemnity compensation may elect to receive death pension instead of such compensation.

(Pub. L. 85-857, Sept. 2, 1958, 72 Stat. 1132, § 417; Pub. L. 91-291, § 13(a), (b), June 25, 1970, 84 Stat. 332; Pub. L. 92-197, § 5, Dec. 15, 1971, 85 Stat. 662; Pub. L. 97-295, § 4(11), Oct. 12, 1982, 96 Stat. 1305; renumbered § 1317 and amended Pub. L. 102-83, §§ 4(a)(1), 5(a), Aug. 6, 1991, 105 Stat. 403, 406; Pub. L. 103-446, title I, § 111(a), Nov. 2, 1994, 108 Stat. 4654.)

AMENDMENTS

1994—Pub. L. 103-446 designated existing provisions as subsec. (a), substituted “Except as provided in subsection (b), no person” for “No person”, and added subsec. (b).

1991—Pub. L. 102-83, § 5(a), renumbered section 417 of this title as this section.

Pub. L. 102-83, § 4(a)(1), substituted “administered by the Secretary” for “administered by the Veterans’ Administration”.

1982—Pub. L. 97-295 substituted “subchapter I of chapter 81 of title 5” for “the Federal Employees’ Compensation Act”.

1971—Pub. L. 92-197 struck out subsec. (a) which, among other provisions, restricted payment of dependency and indemnity compensation in certain cases where death of a veteran occurred while United States Government life insurance or National Service Life Insurance was in force under an in-service waiver of premiums continued under section 724 of this title, and designated subsec. (b) as entire section.

1970—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 91-291 designated material after “unless” in first sentence as cl. (1), added cl. (2), and in last sentence substituted “first sentence” for “preceding sentence”.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1971 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 92-197 effective Jan. 1, 1972, see section 10 of Pub. L. 92-197, set out as a note under section 1311 of this title.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1970 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 91-291, § 13(c), June 25, 1970, 84 Stat. 332, provided that: “No dependency and indemnity compensation shall be payable to any person by virtue of the amendments made by subsection (a) of this section [amending this section] for any person prior to the effective date of this Act [June 25, 1970].”

Pub. L. 91-291, § 14(a), June 25, 1970, 84 Stat. 332, provided that: “The amendments made by this Act [amending this section and sections 705, 707, 745, 765, 767, 768, 769, 770, and 774 [now 905, 907, 945, 965, 967, 968, 969, 1970, and 1974] of this title and enacting provisions set out as notes under this section] shall take effect as of the date of enactment [June 25, 1970], except that sections 10 and 12 [amending sections 717 and 752 [now 1917 and 1952] of this title] shall take effect as of the first day of the first calendar month which begins more than six calendar months after the date of enactment of this Act [June 25, 1970].”

DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION;  
ELIGIBILITY

Pub. L. 92-197, § 8, Dec. 15, 1971, 85 Stat. 662, provided that: “Any person who before January 1, 1972, was not eligible for dependency and indemnity compensation under such title by reason of the provisions of the prior section 417(a) of title 38, United States Code, may elect, in such manner as the Administrator of Veterans’ Affairs shall prescribe, to receive dependency and indemnity compensation, and an election so made shall be final. A person receiving, or entitled to receive, death compensation on December 31, 1971, shall continue to receive death compensation, if otherwise eligible, in the absence of an election to receive dependency and indemnity compensation.”

**§ 1318. Benefits for survivors of certain veterans rated totally disabled at time of death**

(a) The Secretary shall pay benefits under this chapter to the surviving spouse and to the children of a deceased veteran described in subsection (b) of this section in the same manner as if the veteran’s death were service connected.

(b) A deceased veteran referred to in subsection (a) of this section is a veteran who dies, not as the result of the veteran’s own willful misconduct, and who was in receipt of or entitled to receive (or but for the receipt of retired or retirement pay was entitled to receive) compensation at the time of death for a service-connected disability rated totally disabling if—

(1) the disability was continuously rated totally disabling for a period of 10 or more years immediately preceding death;

(2) the disability was continuously rated totally disabling for a period of not less than five years from the date of such veteran’s discharge or other release from active duty; or

(3) the veteran was a former prisoner of war and the disability was continuously rated totally disabling for a period of not less than one year immediately preceding death.

(c) Benefits may not be paid under this chapter by reason of this section to a surviving spouse of a veteran unless—

(1) the surviving spouse was married to the veteran for one year or more immediately preceding the veteran’s death; or

(2) a child was born of the marriage or was born to them before the marriage.

(d) If a surviving spouse or a child receives any money or property of value pursuant to an award in a judicial proceeding based upon, or a settlement or compromise of, any cause of action for damages for the death of a veteran described in subsection (a) of this section, benefits under this chapter payable to such surviving spouse or child by virtue of this section shall not be paid for any month following a month in which any such money or property is received until such time as the total amount of such benefits that would otherwise have been payable equals the total of the amount of the money received and the fair market value of the property received.

(e) For purposes of sections 1448(d) and 1450(c) of title 10, eligibility for benefits under this chapter by virtue of this section shall be deemed eligibility for dependency and indemnity compensation under section 1311(a) of this title.

(Added Pub. L. 100-687, div. B, title XIV, § 1403(a)(1), Nov. 18, 1988, 102 Stat. 4130, § 418;